

Commonwealth of Virginia

Department of Education

RFP #DOE-ARS-2014-09

For

Academic Review Services for Schools *Accredited with Warning* in the First Year

Questions & Answers

1. On the cover page, the "Using Entity and Location" lists "Virginia Public School Divisions Requiring Such Services" as the place(s) of performance. Does the Commonwealth have a list of potential locations that can be referenced to allow our firm to provide a cost proposal?

DOE Response: No, not at this time. SOL data will not be released until September.

2. Regarding the recently published Academic Review Services RFP, would an out of state equivalent to the Virginia Post Graduate Professional Licensure requirement be acceptable or is this requirement non-negotiable?

DOE Response: The language in the RFP is mandatory that "All academic reviewers must possess, at a minimum, an active Virginia post graduate professional license with an endorsement in administration and supervision, any area or grade."

3. If a school is *Accredited with Warning* in only one content area, are the requirements to be completed in only the area of warning, or in all areas?

DOE Response: The requirements apply only to the identified area of warning and the review will address only the area of warning. However, because requirement RFP Section III, A. 6) only requires research based interventions in the areas of English and Mathematics, this will not apply to history and science.

4. Does the three days inclusive timeline apply to each school site if multiple schools within a division are warned? Are reviews completed at the division level?

DOE Response: This applies to each warned school. Reviews will be completed at the school site, and not at the division level.

5. RFP Section III C, indicates only the school and division superintendent receive the report. Does the report also go to the VDOE?

DOE Response: VDOE will request that the division superintendent send the report to VDOE after it is received by the division. The contractor will not send the report to VDOE.

6. Reference RFP Section VI, Is the report only written, or is there an expectation of a formal presentation?

DOE Response: This is up to the contractor and will depend upon what they put in their scope of work. The RFP requirement is for a written report only.

7. Reference RFP Section IV A 1, should the flash drives have files marked by tab?

DOE Response: Yes (See Addendum No. 1).

8. Reference RFP Section IV B, Tab 6; is this the appropriate place to set forth what the offeror's requirements to schools will be?

DOE Response: The offeror will include requirements for schools in this section when the vendor explains the approach to completing the review.

9. Are there provisions for uncooperative schools?

DOE Response: The contractor will contract with the school board/division. Concerns about the school being uncooperative will be referred back to the division superintendent.

10. Reference RFP Section V A, will the point values be included before the proposals are due?

DOE Response: The weights will be published on eVA the day proposals are due prior to the time set for receipt of proposals.

12. Reference RFP Section VIII, Can the general terms and conditions be changed?

DOE Response: The general terms and conditions cannot be changed by any vendor.

13. Will there only be one contract awarded?

DOE Response: The intent is to award to multiple vendors.

14. Is the base unit price per school?

DOE Response: The base unit price represents the price per school, not per reviewer or per student.

15. How many schools will be under first year review?

DOE Response: We are getting our data in at this time. The general public release is pending. This number could be 400-600, mostly elementary and middle.

16. What is the award timeline?

DOE Response: The anticipated award date is mid-September. The initial period of contract is September 15, 2014 – September 14, 2015 (reference RFP, page 1, *Initial Period of Contract*).

17. If the contract is awarded mid-September, how will the vendor start reviewing on October 1?

DOE Initial Response: October 1 is the time at which you can start contracting.

DOE Updated Response: Reference to October 1 deleted. See Addendum No. 1, #1).

18. Reference RFP Section III, last paragraph on page 3, it states the academic review must begin October 1.

DOE Response: The language is revised, see Addendum No. 1, #1.

19. Regarding the recently published Academic Review Services RFP, would an out of state equivalent to the Virginia Post Graduate Professional Licensure requirement be acceptable or is this requirement non-negotiable?

DOE Response: The language set out in the RFP, Section III. B, last sentence, is a mandatory requirement that “All academic reviewers must possess, at a minimum, an active Virginia post graduate professional license with an endorsement in administration and supervision, any area or grade.”

20. Will an out of state vendor be eligible for this award?

VDOE Response: All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the RFP, Section V., *Evaluation and Award Criteria* (page 7). The final score the proposal receives will determine the offerors selected for any resulting contract award(s).

21. Is there a preference for local vendors?

VDOE Response: No, see response to #20 above.

22. Will the Department select multiple vendors, or just one?

VDOE Response: The RFP includes a multiple Award clause, see page 7, RFP Section V. B, Award To Multiple Offerors.

23. How many schools may be sites for this review process?

VDOE Response: The number of sites will vary each year. Data for fall 2014 is being analyzed at this time. The general public release is pending. This number could be 400-600, mostly elementary and middle.

24. How much money does the Department intend to allocate for each school review – for a school of < 600 students, for a school of > 600 students?

VDOE Response: There is not a set amount allocated to each school. The price per school for each of the options proposed on the pricing schedule will be negotiated prior to award.

25. Why is there a requirement that ALL reviewers be licensed in VA?

VDOE Response: Reviewers must be familiar with the SOLs, which are unique to Virginia. In addition, the person must be familiar with the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Virginia Public Schools and the Virginia Standards of Quality.

26. Will the Department consider hiring a vendor where teams are comprised of at least one reviewer who is an educator with a VA license, while the remaining team is comprised of national experts? (We ask because our practices are based on a federally endorsed body of research, and we use highly-trained reviewers in our school reviews process... we definitely advocate for schools to have an opportunity to benefit from the national expertise of these reviewers in addition to local VA practitioners, as this can best inspire transformation and impart relevant and impactful best practices.)

VDOE Response: No.

27. Will the Department be providing the vendor with a site visit protocol or will it expect for the vendor to develop its site visit protocol for the reviews?

VDOE Response: The offeror must propose its own protocol.

28. We have an existing protocol and toolset that can be modified to incorporate additional elements of interest to the Department... should we propose based on our current protocol and toolset?

VDOE Response: All proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the RFP, Section V., *Evaluation and Award Criteria* (page 7). The protocol or tool used must meet the requirements of this section. It does not have to be the VDOE instrument, but it will be evaluated on whether it meets the same criteria.

29. Page 4 of the RFP states that the recommended actions will be presented to the superintendent and the school leaders. One thing that our organization has learned is that if this is meant to be supportive and change-inducing (rather than simply top-down monitoring) it is best to engage school teams in our innovative strategic planning workshops – this adult-oriented, team-building approach has been found to have a greater impact on school performance improvement than extended literacy

programming and even the most effective academic interventions. Would the Department be interested in learning about this additional “Step 2” of our review process?

VDOE Response: Offerors may submit proposals as they see fit; however, all proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in the RFP, Section V., *Evaluation and Award Criteria* (page 7). The RFP is specific about the number of days for the review and the scope of the review.

30. Who has been performing this work for the Department in the past?

VDOE Response: DOE employees.

31. Have any vendors (or institutions) been in direct discussion regarding this current opportunity with the Department? If so, who?

VDOE Response: No vendors have been in contact with the department about this current opportunity other than those at the pre-proposal conference.

32. Can you provide links to information or other documentation regarding guidelines for the Academic Review Process approved by the VA-BOE on 9/21/05? The website we found provides just a general overview, and we would like insight to more specific details regarding the Accreditation Process and resultant Academic Review Process for schools with the status of *Accredited with Warning*.

VDOE Response: See Attachment 1 - “Overview of the Academic Review Process: A Handbook For All Schools That Are Not Fully Accredited.

33. How will approved providers be paired with schools/districts? Will the DOE assign providers to schools? Will providers be expected to solicit schools/districts directly?

VDOE Response: Superintendents from divisions will solicit providers. The DOE will not assign providers to schools.

34. If the school divisions are expected to be paying by individual purchase orders, is it correct to expect no payments to be issued directly from the Virginia Department of Education?

VDOE Response: Correct, the school divisions will issue individual purchase orders and will issue payment for services delivered. The VDOE will not issue any purchase orders or payments.

35. Are any contracts with any school divisions expected to exceed \$50,000?

VDOE Response: This information is not known.

36. Reference RFP Section VI. Reporting and Delivery instructions – A. Progress Reports, if schools have previous academic reviews, will service providers have access to those reports?

VDOE Response: The division superintendent will have a copy; however, these schools are warned for the first time this year.

37. Reference RFP, Attachment B, Pricing Schedule – item 2 – core content area, given the areas of review laid out in Section III Statement of Needs, it would be most helpful if you could explain the rationale for separate pricing of the number of warned areas.

VDOE Response: If a school is accredited with warning in more than one core content area, it may take more resources to perform the academic review and presumably pricing may differ; however, the number of academic reviewers must not exceed the number indicated in RFP Section III, B.

Can you indicate the estimated percentage number of schools which fall within each of the core content areas 1, 2, 3, and 4?

VDOE Response: No, this information cannot be estimated by the VDOE as it is not known at this time. The information is posted to the VDOE website generally after September 26 of each school year.

38. Reference RFP, Attachment B, Pricing Schedule – item 8 – form of agreement, can you confirm how divisions will be assigned to service providers?

VDOE Response: The division superintendent will select the providers, they will not be assigned.